

## Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

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M-02 DRC-01 /119 W

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O 261050Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4565

INFO CINCPAC

INFO DIA

SECDEF

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 10468

3.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PFOR, US, TH

SUBJECT: ULTRANATIONALIST STUDENT GROUP DEMONSTRATES AT EMBASSY

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: FBIS D260915Z JUNE 74

SUMMARY: A SMALL ULTRANATIONALISTIC STUDENT GROUP, THE UNITED FRONT OF PEOPLE AND STUDENTS (UFPS), DEMONSTRATED IN FRONT OF THE EMBASSY JUNE 26. THE PROTEST WAS THAT SOME AMERICAN MILITARY VEHICLES IN THAILAND HAD NO THAI LICENSE PLATES, THUS CONSTITUTING AN INSULT TO THAI SOVEREIGNTY. THE UFPS DEMANDED THAT WE REGISTER THESE VEHICLES WITHIN THREE DAYS, OR IT WOULD TAKE "DRASTIC ACTION." WE ARE TAKING STEPS TO REDUCE THE PUBLIC  
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EXPOSURE OF THOSE U.S. MILITARY VEHICLES IN THE BANGKOK

AREA THAT DO NOT CARRY THAI MARKINGS. END SUMMARY.

1. SOME 25 MEMBERS OF THE UNITED FRONT OF PEOPLE AND STUDENTS (UFPS) STAGED A 15 MINUTE DEMONSTRATION ON WIRELESS ROAD IN FRONT OF THE EMBASSY AT 1010 HOURS LOCAL TIME. SOME 12 NEWSPAPERMAN, 12 POLICE, AND 40 ON-LOOKERS SUPPLEMENTED THE STUDENTS AT THE FRONT GATE. THE GROUP'S LEADER, KRIANGSAK KHROTI, SPOKE FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES THROUGH A LOUDSPEAKER, ARGUING THAT AMERICAN MILITARY VEHICLES IN THAILAND WERE ILLEGAL BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT REGISTERED WITH THAI AUTHORITIES. HE DEMANDED THAT THESE VEHICLES BE REGISTERED WITHIN THREE DAYS. HE SAID THAT ON THE DAY OF THE DEADLINE, THE UFPS WOULD RETURN TO THE EMBASSY, BURN AN EFFIGY OF AN AMERICAN VEHICLE, AND POSSIBLY TAKE "DRASTIC MEASURES". (THE GROUP'S WRITTEN DEMANDS CLAIMED THAT ILLEGAL VEHICLES WOULD BE DESTROYED.) AFTER THE SPEAKER FINISHED, THE GROUP DEPARTED THE AREA, LEAVING A WREATH, THE EFFIGY, AND THEIR DEMANDS IN WRITING.

2. THE UFPS HAS RECENTLY EMBARKED ON A PROGRAM OF PROTESTING BUSINESSES WHICH DISPLAY ONLY ENGLISH LANGUAGE SIGNS. IT HAS MAILED A CIRCULAR LETTER TO A LARGE NUMBER OF FOREIGN FIRMS IN BANGKOK DEMANDING BILINGUAL SIGNS. UFPS MEMBERS WERE INVOLVED IN BREAKING GLASS DOORS TO THE BANGKOK OFFICES OF JAPAN AIR LINES JUNE 9. IN AN ADMIRABLE FEAT OF GYMNASTICS, THEY SCALED A LARGE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE FIRESTONE TIRE COMPANY SIGN ON TOP OF A TEN-STORY BUILDING ON JUNE 22, AND DRAPED THE SIGN IN BLACK CLOTH.

3. AN AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER WHO HAS RECENTLY SPOKEN WITH KRIANGSAK AT THE UFPS HEADQUARTERS, WHICH IS IN THE COMPOUND OF THE FREE PEOPLE'S LEAGUE OF THAILAND, CHARACTERIZES HIM AS ULTRANATIONALISTIC. HE SAID THAT KRIANGSAK, WHO IS IN HIS EARLY TWENTIES, IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS A FORMER ENGINEERING STUDENT WHO IS NOW TAKING COURSES IN LIBERAL ARTS AT RAMKHAMHENG UNIVERSITY. HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT HE INTERMITTENTLY WRITES FOR "PRACHATHIPATAI" NEWSPAPER. KRIANGSAK  
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IDENTIFIED LAWYER MANOP RATHANARITTIKUN AS THE UFPS'S MAJOR SOURCE OF FINANCING. (IN AN ARTICLE ON THE JUNE 9 JAL INCIDENT, THE "BANGKOK POST" IDENTIFIED MANOP AS UFPS'S LEGAL ADVISOR).

4. THE AUSTRALIAN SAID THAT THE UFPS HEADQUARTERS IS SPARSELY FURNISHED, INDICATING MINIMAL FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS. KRIANGSAK CLAIMED THAT THE GROUP HAD A

MEMBERSHIP OF 600 AMONG WHOM WERE PRATHIP SIANGWAN, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEMBER AND PRESIDENT OF THE SAMLOR DRIVERS' ASSOCIATION. THE AUSTRALIAN ESTIMATED, HOWEVER, THAT THE GROUP'S EFFECTIVE MEMBERSHIP IS ABOUT 60.

5. POLICE COLONEL PRATHIM SANTHIPRAPHOP, CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION, TOLD THE REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER THAT THE EMBASSY SHOULD TAKE THE GROUP'S DEMANDS SERIOUSLY. HE FELT THAT THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY THAT THE GROUP WOULD INITIATE ACTION AGAINST AMERICAN MILITARY VEHICLES IN BANGKOK.

6. COMMENT: THE RTG PROVIDES AN ESTIMATED 165 REGISTERED VEHICLES FOR MACTHAI/JUSMAG INCLUDING MOST OF THE SEDANS IN THE MACTHAI MOTOR POOL. THERE ARE NUMEROUS ADDITIONAL VEHICLES IN THE MACTHAI, SUPTHAI, USAF AND OICC MOTOR POOLS WHICH STILL CARRY U.S. MILITARY MARKINGS. SUPTHAI HAS REPAINTED SOME 27 OF ITS VEHICLES USED IN BANGKOK AND HAS REMOVED THE MILITARY MARKINGS FROM AN ADDITIONAL NINE.

7. COMUSMACTHAI, IN AN APRIL 16 LETTER TO GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHANMANAN OF THE SUPREME COMMAND, BROACHED THE IDEA OF PUTTING THAI LETTERS AND A U.S. NUMBERING SYSTEM ON U.S. MILITARY VEHICLES. SUPREME COMMAND RECEIVED THIS PROPOSAL UNENTHUSIASTICALLY. WE WILL MAKE FURTHER APPROACHES, BUT WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THE THAI BUREAUCRACY COULD RESPOND TO THE THREE DAY DEADLINE. A KEY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL, WHOME WE INFORMED ABOUT THE DEMONSTRATION, DESCRIBED IT AS A MANIFESTATION OF THE CURRENT XENOPHOBIC FERVOR IN THAILAND, AND ADDED THAT THE DEADLINE WAS ABSURD.

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8. UFPS IS AN EXTREMELY SMALL GROUP ON THE RIGHTIST FRINGES OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND IS COMPOSED MAINLY OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS. IT HAS NOT IN THE PAST PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED ITSELF WITH OTHER STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS IN DEMONSTRATIONS OR PROTESTS. THE RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THIS GROUP MAY IN PART BE AN ATTEMPT TO OVERCOME ITS ISOLATION. SINCE NATIONALISM IS A PART OF THE THAI STUDENT MOVEMENT, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT THE UFPS MAY HAVE DEVELOPED AN ISSUE WHICH OTHER STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS MIGHT HAVE SOME ENTHUSIASM FOR. THE MAJOR STUDENT ORGANIZATION, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT SUPPORT VIOLENCE AGAINST AMERICAN MILITARY VEHICLES.

9. WE ARE TAKING STEPS TO REDUCE THE PUBLIC EXPOSURE OF THOSE U.S. MILITARY VEHICLES IN THE BANGKOK AREA THAT

DO NOT CARRY THAI MARKINGS.

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